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Local Girl Scouts Test Science Skills at RWU

RWU chapter of the Society of Women Engineers led 46 Girl Scouts through 'Physics is Phun' workshop to encourage STEM education among young women



Roger Williams University sophomore Anna Strang shows local Girl Scouts from the Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England how to build a bristlebot at the 'Physics is Phun' workshop. Image Credit: RWU

February 9, 2016 | Lynda Curtis

BRISTOL, R.I. – On Saturday, Feb. 6, the Roger Williams University chapter of Society of Women Engineers hosted 46 local Girl Scouts for a “Physics is Phun” workshop – an annual hands-on science program that allows scouts from the [Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England](#) to earn a new badge by completing six different experiments on electricity, force and motion, aeronautics, optics, acoustics and space.

Seven Girl Scout troops from across Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts – including Bristol, Chariho, Cumberland, East Providence, Narragansett, Rehoboth and Portsmouth – participated in the morning workshop created by the local professional chapter of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). The annual event was created in an effort to encourage young girls to become interested in studying or pursuing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) as a potential career path. The SWE student chapter has held the event on the Bristol campus since 2001.

"If you look at the mission of the Society of Women Engineers, it not just about helping women network with other women in engineering, but it's to reach out and excite girls about engineering as well as to educate – people don't even really know what engineers do," said Janet Baldwin, professor of engineering from the School of Engineering, Computing and Construction Management.

More than 14 RWU engineering students from the SWE student chapter facilitated the event to help teach the Girl Scouts as they moved from station to station conducting experiments that included building a marshmallow launcher and powering a LED light using the chemical energy within a lemon. The scouts also learned how to make a kaleidoscope, a straw oboe and a water whistle.

Roger Williams University junior Ariane Marquant serves as president of the SWE chapter and has participated in the workshop for a number of years and believes that serving as a role model for the young scouts is one of its key goals.

"One of our main purposes for this event is to introduce the girls to STEM but to also become role models," Marquant said. "We love what we're learning as engineering students and if we can get other girls to realize that this may be an area they are interested in, that's great."

